

FACT SHEET

For more information, contact:

Katherine E. Browne, PhD
Professor, Dept of Anthropology
Colorado State University
970-491-5813
kate.browne@colostate.edu

English title: *Lifting the Weight of History:
Martinique's Afro-Caribbean Women Entrepreneurs*
with English narration and English subtitles

French title: *Au Tournant de l'Histoire:
Femmes chefs d'entreprises en Martinique*
the original French language version

Length: 30 minutes

Topic: Afro-Caribbean women entrepreneurs and a shifting culture of business

Language: available in English and French versions

Broadcast: The French version of this film was first broadcast in summer 2008, nationally on French TV (France 3), in overseas French departments and territories (RFO), and around the world (TV5, French satellite TV)

Producer: Katherine E. Browne

Researcher/Writer: Katherine E. Browne

Director: Ginny Martin

Videographer/Editor: Ginny Martin

Production funding: National Science Foundation; Colorado State University

Post-production funding: Katherine E. Browne

Film website:

<http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/Anthropology/film/lifting/index.html>

Research context for film:

Kate Browne has conducted research in Martinique for many years. Her original longterm study focused on the interaction of Afro-Creole cultural identity and earning strategies that take place off the books and occur at all socioeconomic levels. That case study became her first book, *Creole Economics: Caribbean Cunning Under the French Flag*, published by University of Texas Press (2004). <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~kbrowne/book.html>).

Following that project, centered largely around the social world and economic lives of men, Browne undertook a second major study to explore the economic energy she had seen local women devoting to entrepreneurship. Between 1999 and 2004, Browne conducted in-depth interviews with 105 Afro-Creole entrepreneurs (70 women and 35 men). *Lifting the Weight of History* was inspired by this research and Browne's concern to tell the story of a women-driven paradigm shift that is transforming the local culture of business.

About the research sample:

Without a local database of business owners or any existing research on the gendered patterns of business owners, Browne called on local offices of government, professional business associations, and a wide network of personal contacts and scholars to help her locate a diverse group of female and male business owners. As a result of this research, the government offices charged with researching economic trends indicated that they would begin tracking demographic and other statistical data of business ownership by gender.

The story of creating *Lifting the Weight of History*:

To tell the story of women entrepreneurs, Browne selected five women from her sample of interviews with 70 women owners and recruited a veteran filmmaker, Ginny Martin to capture the footage and edit it. The five women profiled in the film represent a diverse group in many ways, including

- their varying ages, class backgrounds, and household arrangements
- their businesses, including agriculture, retail, small industry, service, and medical
- their varying locations around the island

To contribute critical context and perspective to the womens' stories, Browne chose key government officials, local scholars, and a business school director.

Post-Production

The interview footage required more than 1000 pages of transcription and another 1000 pages of translation. All interview text was coded in Atlas ti, a qualitative data analysis program. From the coded material, Browne identified key themes and worked with these themes to develop a script for the film. She located an Afro-Creole voice talent from Martinique to narrate the French version. Martin edited the footage to work with the script and directed all other post-production video work for the French and English versions including the narration recording, the music production and the final sound mixing to create the finished DVD for public use.

The French broadcast

In early 2007, Browne took a 45-minute rough cut of the French language version to Paris to meet with production personnel at French TV stations. Based on their interest in the work, she negotiated national and international broadcasts of a 30-minute version. That version began its run on national and international TV in summer 2008.

The English version:

In December 2008, Browne and Martin completed an English version of this film with English narration and English subtitles.

Additional themes to the paradigm-shift in the local culture of business:

1. gender shapes the form and meaning of entrepreneurship and this varies culturally
2. Afro-Caribbean women, like African-American women, have long assumed roles as economic producers as well as household managers
3. Unlike African American women, Afro-Caribbean women have the benefit of growing up in a society in which others like them are the dominant majority, hold key positions of power, prestige and wealth.
4. French Afro-Caribbean women entrepreneurs demonstrate their sense of authority by rejecting male models of business management and instead emphasizing "humanistic" approaches to running their businesses
5. French Afro-Caribbean women entrepreneurs also demonstrate influences from French and Creole culture by asserting their strong commitment to femininity